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EXAMINER

RUTLEDGE, AMELIA L

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2176

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

1. This action is responsive to communications: Amendment submitted with Request for Continued Examination (RCE), filed 11/21/2005.
2. Claims 1-36 are pending in the case. Claims 1, 14, and 24 are independent claims. Claims 37 and 38 have been cancelled.

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

3. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 11/21/2005 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. **Claims 1-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Du et al. (hereinafter "Du"), U.S. Patent No. 6,041,306, issued March 2000, in view of SiteMinder Policy Server Operations Guide, Version 4.0 (hereinafter**

Art Unit: 2176

“SiteMinder”), Netegrity Inc., published 1997 and submitted with Applicant’s Information Disclosure Statement filed March 15, 2004.

Amended independent claim 1 cites: *A method for using workflows, comprising the steps of: associating workflows with domains in a data structure, each domain identifies a portion of said data structure;*

receiving a request to perform a task that pertains to said data structure; and performing a first workflow for said task, said first workflow is associated with a first domain that includes a target of said request;

Du teaches a method for performing flexible workflow process execution in a distributed workflow management system (Abstract), and encapsulating legacy systems using business objects as a representation of something active in the business domain, to map between the business model and the operational procedures of the workflow process system (Col. 8, l. 36-44; l. 52-64). Du teaches launching workflow process instances in response to user requests (Col. 7, l. 45-46).

While Du teaches associating workflows with business objects in the business domain, Du does not explicitly teach associating workflows with domains in a data structure. However, SiteMinder teaches a policy server for associating workflows, i.e., rules for user interaction with system resources, with policy domains (p. 235-237) by using SiteMinder responses and response groups (Chapter 11, p. 302-304) and creating policies to specify actions that should take place when users access specific resources, which are tasks and/or software within a domain (Chapter 12, Policies, p. 325-328), compare to *associating workflows with domains in a data structure, each*

Art Unit: 2176

domain identifies a portion of said data structure. Both Du and SiteMinder are analogous art, since both are directed toward policy management. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to apply SiteMinder to Du, so that Du would have the benefit of a policy server which would integrate applications and improve workflow by integrating directories and external databases in its policies so that legacy applications and systems could still be used (SiteMinder, p. 22-23, last paragraph).

Claim 1 also cites: *wherein; said first workflow comprises a predefined set of steps that perform said tasks said predefined set of steps comprising a first step and a second step;*

said first step is performed by a first program;

said second step is performed by a second program;

information is passed between said first program and said second program according to a defined set of rules: and

at least one of the first program and the second program is external to the workflow.

Du teaches creating workflow processes by assembling business objects in sequence, i.e., *comprises a predefined set of steps that perform said tasks*, and applying a set of rules for passing information between programs, and executing the flexible workflow processes as specified by a directed graph comprising a set of nodes connected by arcs (Col. 8, l. 45-63; Col. 11, l. 26-Col. 12, l. 29). Du teaches resource mapping in flexible workflow paths that also support redirect resource mapping, which allows a

Art Unit: 2176

business object to recommend another business object for a task (Col. 17, l. 25-40), compare to *information is passed between said first program and said second program according to a defined set of rules: and at least one of the first program and the second program is external to the workflow*. The flexible workflow execution allows freedom of task assignment and external activities to be performed (Col. 12, l. 41-43; Col. 6, l. 39-49).

Regarding dependent claim 2, while Du does not explicitly teach associating a workflow with a hierarchical data structure, SiteMinder teaches creating a policy domain which contains zero or more realms (p. 241, "Creating a Realm"). SiteMinder teaches that realms represent groups of resources and realms can be nested within other realms to represent the grouping of network resources (p. 247-249, "Understanding Nested Realms"). Compare to claim 2; *said step of associating said first workflow includes choosing a first entry in said data structure, said data structure is a hierarchical data structure, said first domain includes said first entry and entries below said first entry*. Both Du and SiteMinder are analogous art, since both are directed toward policy management. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to apply SiteMinder to Du, so that Du would have the benefit of a policy server which would integrate applications and improve workflow by integrating directories and external databases in its policies so that legacy applications and systems could still be used (SiteMinder, p. 22-23, last paragraph).

Regarding dependent claim 3, Du teaches identifying one or more workflows associated with a target (Col. 5, l. 59-Col. 6, l. 10). SiteMinder teaches associating

Art Unit: 2176

resources with a policy domain (p. 235-236). Both Du and SiteMinder are analogous art, since both are directed toward policy management. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to apply SiteMinder to Du, so that Du would have the benefit of a policy server which would integrate applications and improve workflow by integrating directories and external databases in its policies so that legacy applications and systems could still be used (SiteMinder, p. 22-23, last paragraph).

Regarding dependent claim 4, Du teaches that in flexible workflow process execution multiple workflows can be created and/or adapted to a user request, and that a user can identify a target, thereby altering the workflow and a new workflow or set of workflows may be created to perform the task (Col. 19, l. 54-67).

Regarding dependent claims 5 and 6, Du teaches that the user can request to delete or modify a target, for example the role specification and activity to a business object (Col. 19, l. 54-67). In another example, the user can request to add or drop communication paths between certain endpoints in a private virtual network (Col. 10, l. 40-45).

Regarding dependent claims 7 and 8, Du teaches the steps of identifying a set of one more workflows that perform a task and are associated with domains that include the target, and reporting one more workflow, and receiving from a user a selection of the first workflow, and performing one or more steps of said first workflow, in the prototype of automatically configuring a data path with a flexible workflow (Fig. 6, Col. 10, l. 5-Col. 11, l. 25).

Regarding dependent claims 9 and 10, Du teaches the use of policies to ensure proper authorization and authentication (Col. 8, l. 57-63), but Du does not explicitly teach an integrated identity and access system. However, SiteMinder comprises an integrated identity and access system (p. 20-24, "Overview") with user self-registration (p. 395, par. 2). Both Du and SiteMinder are analogous art, since both are directed toward policy management. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to apply SiteMinder to Du, so that Du would have the benefit of a policy server which would integrate applications and improve workflow by integrating directories and external databases in its policies so that legacy applications and systems could still be used (SiteMinder, p. 22-23, last paragraph).

Regarding dependent claim 11, Du teaches that workflows can delegate work to other workflow processes or resources (Col. 20, l. 50-Col. 21, l. 15).

Regarding dependent claims 12 and 13, while Du does not explicitly teach associating a workflow with a hierarchical data structure, SiteMinder teaches creating a policy domain which contains zero or more realms (p. 241, "Creating a Realm"). SiteMinder teaches that realms represent groups of resources and realms can be nested within other realms to represent the grouping of network resources (p. 247-249, "Understanding Nested Realms"). Compare to claim 12; *said data structure is a hierarchical data structure, and each domain identifies an entry in said hierarchical data structure and additional entries below said entry*. Further, SiteMinder teaches that the hierarchical data structure of policy domains and realms includes an LDAP directory (p. 352). Both Du and SiteMinder are analogous art, since both are directed toward policy

Art Unit: 2176

management. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to apply SiteMinder to Du, so that Du would have the benefit of a policy server which would integrate applications and improve workflow by integrating directories and external databases in its policies so that legacy applications and systems could still be used (SiteMinder, p. 22-23, last paragraph).

In regard to independent claim 14, claim 14 reflects the processor readable storage device(s) having processor readable code used to perform the method as claimed in claim 1, and is rejected along the same rationale.

In regard to dependent claims 15-23, claims 15-23 reflect the processor readable storage device(s) having processor readable code used to perform the method as claimed in claims 2, 3, 4, 7-9, 11-13, and are rejected along the same rationale.

In regard to independent claim 24, claim 24 reflects the apparatus used to perform the method as claimed in claim 1, and is rejected along the same rationale.

In regard to dependent claims 25-33, claims 25-33 reflect the apparatus used to perform the method as claimed in claims 2, 3, 4, 7-9, 11-13, and are rejected along the same rationale.

Regarding dependent claims 34 and 35, while Du teaches a flexible workflow process execution system, Du does not explicitly teach managing a target identity profile. However, SiteMinder teaches automatically managing target user identity profiles using workflows, i.e., specifying templates and sequences for registration (p. 398-399; p. 398-401). SiteMinder teaches applying domain policies to users (p. 141-416), i.e., changing a user attribute. Both Du and SiteMinder are analogous art, since

Art Unit: 2176

both are directed toward policy management. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to apply SiteMinder to Du, so that Du would have the benefit of a policy server which would integrate applications and improve workflow by integrating directories and external databases in its policies so that legacy applications and systems could still be used (SiteMinder, p. 22-23, last paragraph).

Regarding dependent claim 36, while Du does not explicitly teach managing certificates, SiteMinder teaches managing certificates associated with identity profiles (p. 533-536) via the user's browser. Both Du and SiteMinder are analogous art, since both are directed toward policy management. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to apply SiteMinder to Du, so that Du would have the benefit of a policy server which would integrate applications and improve workflow by integrating directories and external databases in its policies so that legacy applications and systems could still be used (SiteMinder, p. 22-23, last paragraph).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to amended independent claims 1, 14, and 24 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The new grounds of rejection include the Du patent and the SiteMinder reference, which are being relied upon to disclose the newly claimed limitation, ***wherein; said first workflow***

Art Unit: 2176

comprises a predefined set of steps that perform said tasks said predefined set of steps comprising a first step and a second step;

said first step is performed by a first program;

said second step is performed by a second program;

information is passed between said first program and said second program according to a defined set of rules: and

at least one of the first program and the second program is external to the workflow.

It is the examiner's opinion that one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to arrive at the instant invention by combining Du and SiteMinder.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Amelia Rutledge whose telephone number is 571-272-7508. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 9:30 - 6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Heather Herndon can be reached on 571-272-4136. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 2176

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AR

William F. Bashore
WILLIAM BASHORE
PRIMARY EXAMINER
[Signature] 2/5/2006